DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 391 623 RC 020 429

TITLE	Annenberg Rural Challenge.
INSTITUTION	Annenberg Rural Challenge, Granby, CO.
PUB DATE	95
NOTE	41p.; Photographs may not reproduce adequately.
AVAILABLE FROM	Annenberg Rural Challenge, P.O. Box 1569, Granby, CO 80446 (free).
PUB TYPE	Reports - Descriptive (141)
EDRS PRICE	MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	Change Strategies; Community Involvement; *Educational Change; *Educational Principles; Educational Strategies; Elementary Secondary Education; *Partnerships in Education; Philanthropic Foundations; *Private Financial Support; Public Education; *Rural Education; *Rural Schools
IDENTIFIERS	*Annenberg Rural Challenge

ABSTRACT

Former U.S. Ambassador and philanthropist Walter H. Annenberg has pledged a significant portion of his personal wealth to America's public schools if his contribution is "matched" by the nation. Up to $50 million in matching money over the next 5 years has been earmarked specifically for rural schools. This document provides a context for the Annenberg Rural Challenge, an explanation of its vision for rural schools, and an overview of how it operates. The Annenberg Rural Challenge recognizes that improving the nation's schools requires the full involvement of the rural constituency, routinely excluded from key national policy making decisions. This rural initiative seeks to confront the myths and stereotypes that haunt rural education, and to challenge those involved with rural schools to build on their strengths to create lasting reform and "genuinely good" schools. Such schools recognize that every child is special and can learn, expect rigorous intellectual performance of each student, and promote democracy and authority in the classroom and in school governance and policy making. In addition, genuinely good rural schools make the most of their rural nature, acknowledge their dual obligation of preparing students for rural and urban environments, and effectively compensate for rural-related disadvantages. The Rural Challenge will place the overwhelming majority of its resources in those communities, schools, districts, and networks that are acting in harmony with its vision. Rather than being a grant competition, the Rural Challenge features a search process carried out by regional teams, collaboration with a variety of rural partners, inclusiveness of all stakeholders and interested citizens and of diverse rural populations, and a national agenda of network building and advocacy for rural education. Includes photographs. (SV)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED 391 623

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

Paul Nachtigal

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

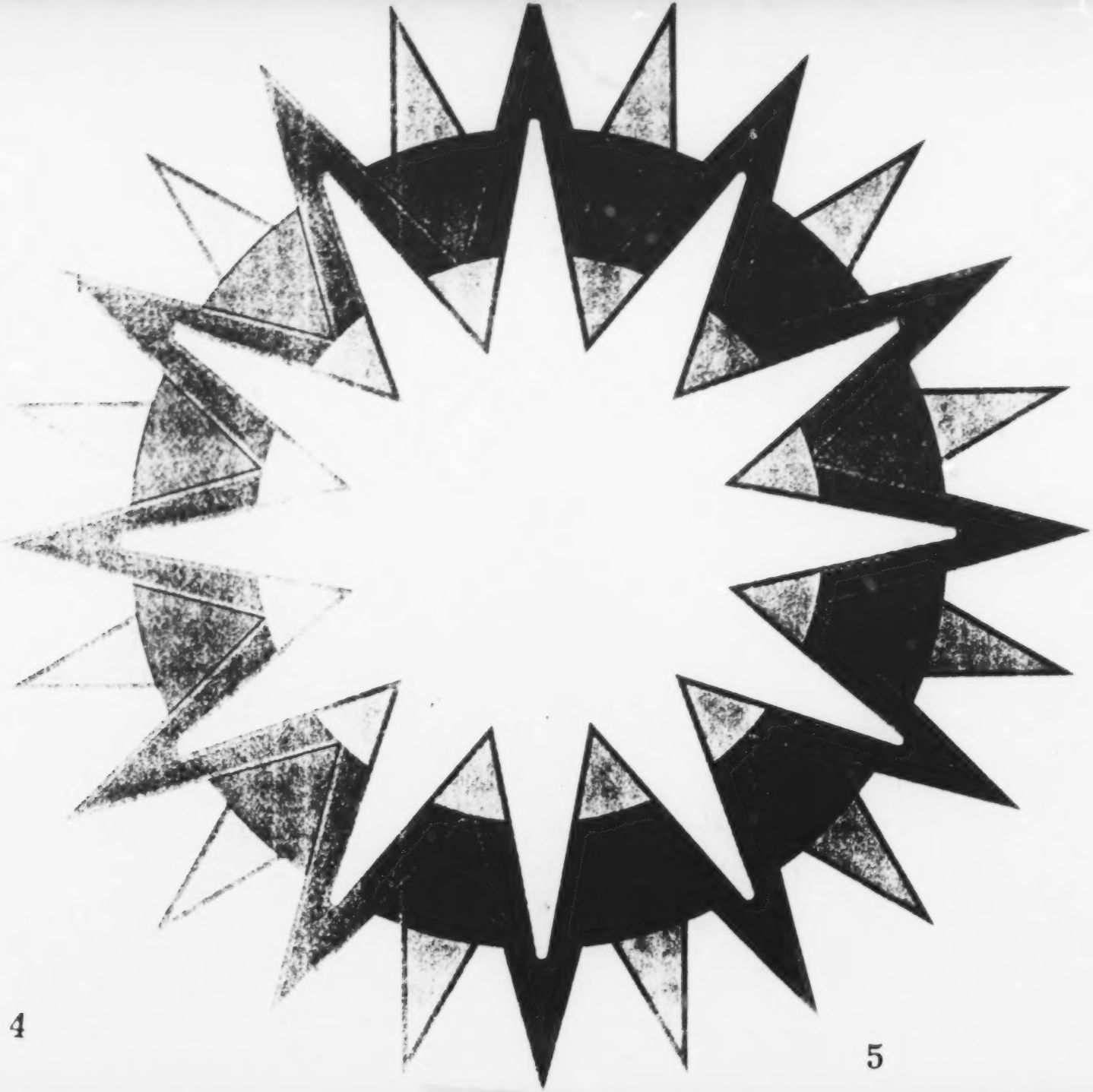
This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

Rc 020429

BEST COPY AVAILABLE



4

5

Waiting to begin the long bus ride to school in the mountains of Appalachia.

Rob Amberg

The Annenberg Rural Challenge

An Introduction and Invitation

WALTER H. ANNENBERG — publisher, former U.S. Ambassador to Great Britain, and philanthropist — has issued a remarkable challenge to his fellow Americans. He pledged to donate a significant portion of his own personal wealth to America's public schools over the next five years, if his contribution is "matched" by the nation. Ambassador Annenberg is seeking not just matching funds, but also a matching commitment from the rest of us — students, parents, educators, community leaders, policymakers and "ordinary" citizens — to dramatically improve the country's public schools, from kindergarten through high school.

While most of the Annenberg Challenge's resources are being made available to public schools in the nation's largest cities, Ambassador Annenberg has committed up to $50 million in matching money over the next five years specifically for rural schools.* The Annenberg Rural Challenge is the single largest private investment ever made in the reform of our nation's rural schools.

"

Together, we can make rural schools the shining stars of the nation's public education system.

"

The four goals of the Rural Challenge are to support (where they already exist) or to help create (where they do not yet exist):

1) the greatest number and widest distribution of genuinely good, genuinely rural schools;

2) political, professional, policy and public environments that will enable such rural schools to survive and thrive;

3) a powerful and sustainable rural school reform movement that actively engages and involves families, communities and the broader public, as well as education professionals; and,

4) an effective combination of documentation and evaluation methods to ensure rich and reliable ways of knowing what has succeeded, what has not, and why.

There are a number of challenges that must be met to bring these four goals to successful fruition. The extent to which rural schools and communities are ignored, misunderstood, and falsely stereotyped suggest that we, as a nation, ought to *think* differently about them. The frequency with which they are shortchanged, burdened by inappropriate policies, and disrespected implies that we, as a nation, should *act* differently toward rural schools and communities.

This introduction provides a context for the Annenberg Rural Challenge, an explanation of its vision for rural school reform and an overview of how it operates. It also is an invitation. Individuals, schools and organizations sharing this vision of American rural education are invited to become partners in accomplishing the Rural Challenge's ambitious agenda. Together, we can make rural schools the shining stars of the nation's public education system.

* The Annenberg Rural Challenge uses two definitions of "rural." First, a "rural" school draws the vast majority of its students from communities located outside the boundaries of any of the Census Bureau's Standard Metropolitan Statistical Areas. Second, a rural school is one that serves students at any level from kindergarten through high school and that generally would be considered "rural" in the context of its own state and region.

A CHALLENGE TO THOSE UNFAMILIAR WITH RURAL SCHOOLS

The mention of rural schools conjures up a variety of images. Some are warmly nostalgic impressions of little red schoolhouses in which dedicated teachers and a harmonious community work together to prepare a new generation of rural students to become the backbone of the nation. Some are harsh images of dilapidated buildings, third rate teachers, and narrow, outdated education programs that combine to severely limit the future prospects of rural students.

In the professional and public debates about the future of American education, however, rural schools are rarely considered at all — or are treated merely as an afterthought. *National* education initiatives often "forget" to include the tens of thousands of schools that lie outside metropolitan areas and rural voices routinely are excluded when key decisions about *all* schools are made.

By contrast, the Annenberg Rural Challenge recognizes that improving the *nation's* schools can be accomplished only by fully including the rural constituency. After all, "rural" accurately describes the majority of America's school districts, more than a third of the public schools and approximately a quarter of all students and teachers.

And yet, America's rural schools, like the communities they serve, are stunningly diverse. They range from relatively sophisticated educational institutions in thriving resort areas and college towns to schools that provide a very basic education in impoverished rural places. Some have tiny enrollments, while others have as many students as a typical metropolitan school. In ethnic, racial, cultural and educational terms, America's rural schools are best pictured as an amazing and beautiful "patchwork quilt."

This rural initiative was created, in part, to challenge the myths and damaging stereotypes that haunt rural education. By showing rural schools in a new and true light, the Rural Challenge will encourage the nation to build upon the rich diversity among rural schools and to blaze a variety of uniquely rural trails to educational excellence.

> *"America's rural schools, like the communities they serve, are stunningly diverse ... and are best pictured as an amazing and beautiful 'patchwork quilt.'"*
>
> 12

Kindergarten students playing "London Bridge" in a bilingual classroom in northern California.

Evan Johnson / Impact Visuals

A CHALLENGE TO THOSE INVOLVED WITH RURAL SCHOOLS

Many rural schools and communities have not yet embraced any significant school improvement agenda. Whether out of a sense of complacency, frustration or quiet desperation, many rural schools continue to provide a kind and quality of education that ill-serves the interests of their students, their teachers, their communities — and the nation. Noting that the same also is true of many metropolitan schools does not take the onus off rural people to improve their schools from the inside out. Pretending everything is just fine when it isn't — or passively waiting for their schools to be rescued by someone else from somewhere else — are ineffective strategies for helping rural schools achieve their full potential.

Still, rural schools are not hapless victims nor is the rural education story an altogether depressing one. In truth, some of today's finest public schools are found far outside America's cities and suburbs. Moreover, rural schools pioneered numerous educational practices — e.g., peer tutoring, communities as learning resources, interdisciplinary studies, multi-grade classrooms, cross-age grouping, and site-based management — that today are considered desirable "innovations" in metropolitan schools.

The unrecognized strengths of many rural schools, including their small size and strong community connections, are a powerful base on which the Rural Challenge can build. This initiative will support those rural educators, parents, community leaders and "ordinary" citizens who already are doing exemplary work to advance the education of rural students. The priorities are to strengthen and deepen the good work already underway, to encourage a greater degree of collaboration among leading people, places and programs, and to create a critical mass of rural school reforms and reformers that will endure.

The Rural Challenge also will reach out to those people who want to create lasting, positive changes in their schools, but who need help getting started. It is intended to be a source of encouragement and a catalyst for *all* who share the Challenge's vision of rural education.

"The unrecognized strengths of many rural schools, including their small size and strong community connections, are a powerful base on which the Rural Challenge can build."

Robin Sachs

Janice Herbranson is the teacher, principal, cook and janitor at Salund School in McLeod, North Dakota. She is pictured with the school's entire student body.

A CHALLENGE TO DEVELOP GENUINELY GOOD SCHOOLS

Because the flaws in public education today are so profound, the Annenberg Rural Challenge is interested only in bold school reforms that have the potential to result in fundamental changes in teaching and learning. Moreover, the Challenge has a clear sense of the kind of public schools it wants to encourage and assist. These schools would be radically different from the *status quo*. Developing and/or nurturing them is the main outcome sought by the Rural Challenge.

"Genuinely good" schools are defined by the Rural Challenge as those guided by the **educational principles** and the **school characteristics** described here. The ability to effectively implement these principles and manifest these characteristics is the criterion on which potential partners and participating schools will be judged. If these hallmarks of the Annenberg Challenge currently were used to assess America's public schools (urban, suburban or rural), precious few would get passing scores. And yet, if U.S. public schools were able to live up to these standards, then the education our nation's children received would be the envy of the world.

> *"... if U.S. public schools were able to live up to these standards, then the education our nation's children received would be the envy of the world."*

Dolly Naranjo served as both teacher and principal in Tesuque Pueblo, New Mexico.

The graduating class of Monroe Senior High School in Packers Bend, Alabama.

Andrew Goetze

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

> "
> *... an ethic of caring, non-violence, cooperation, respect and responsibility ... inspires and allows genuine learning to occur.*
> "

The Challenge promotes three sets of principles and characteristics:

1. ***Every child is special, and every child can, and must, learn.*** In practice, this means:

   - Schools in which each child is known, valued, helped to learn in ways appropriate to his/her individual development, and assisted to play a meaningful role in the life of the school. No child should feel marginal or be treated impersonally at such schools. Top priority is given to ensuring that each and every student has a positive, nurturing school experience.

   - Schools that behave as educational resources for every child, not as babysitters, warehouses, or sorting machines separating the presumed "haves" from the apparent "have nots." Where factors beyond the child's control (e.g., hunger, learning disabilities, or language) inhibit educational progress, such schools collaborate fully with other agencies and groups to help students overcome these obstacles.

   - Schools that exhibit an ethic of caring, non-violence, cooperation, respect and responsibility toward, and among, all members of the school community. Such an ethic inspires and allows genuine learning to occur. Such schools not only emphasize self-discipline and individual development, but also — through cooperative learning methods and team-building projects — establish the foundation for children to function effectively in the workplaces and civic society of the twenty-first century.

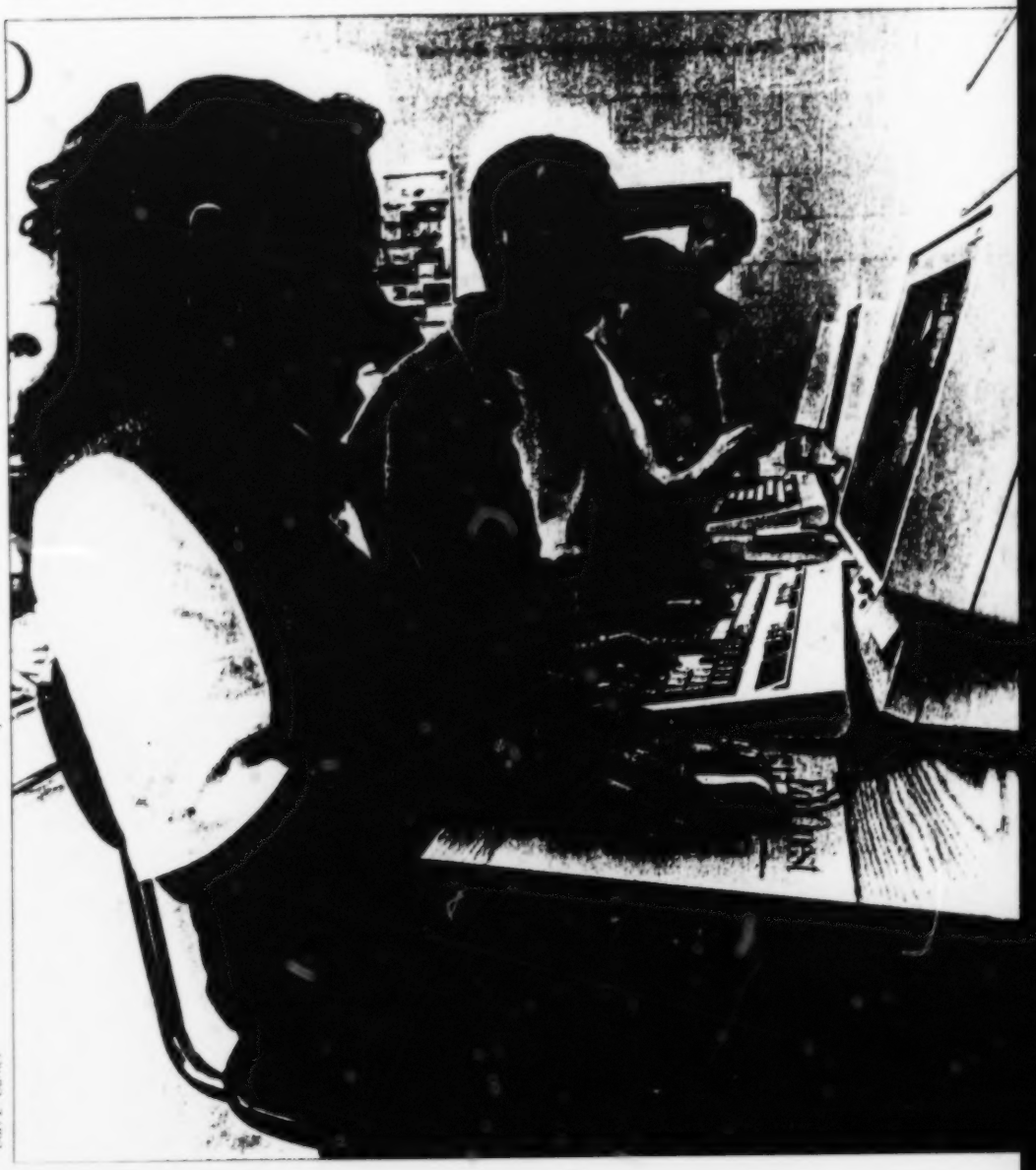
2. ***Rigorous intellectual performance is expected of each student.*** In practice, this means:

- Schools that establish, promote and maintain high academic standards for all students — and that help all students develop high expectations of themselves as learners. Such schools inculcate in their students a love of learning that will inspire them to develop the attitudes and intellectual habits of effective life-long learners. They do all they can to ensure that students *master* challenging academic material, instead of allowing teachers to merely "cover" course material, or allowing students to simply "get by" with a passing grade.

- Schools that help students to develop multiple intelligences, talents, and skills. Such schools make full use of the teachers and other learning resources available within and beyond the school itself. They limit their reliance on lectures and textbooks, and effectively employ both modern technologies and "hands on," experiential education. They also integrate as fully as possible the realms of academic and vocational education. Finally, such schools reject the idea that learning occurs best in fragmented pieces of time and subject matter. They use time more creatively and encourage interdisciplinary learning, so students are better prepared for the increasingly complex, interrelated world in which they will live and work as adults.

- Schools that do not rely solely on proxies for student learning (e.g., standardized tests and grades), but also use comprehensive, individualized assessments of each student's knowledge and ability (for example through portfolios, exhibits and public performances). Such schools provide ample opportunities for students to actively display what they know, and what they can do, to audiences beyond their classrooms and their homes. Moreover, such schools make promotion and graduation contingent upon students demonstrating their mastery of an agreed-upon set of core skills, competencies and knowledge. In other words, just enduring a given amount of time in school will no longer suffice.

Students cruising the information highway from their rural middle school classroom.



Bob E. Barnes

"

Such schools provide ample opportunities for students to actively display what they know, and what they can do, to audiences beyond their classrooms and their homes.

"

Robert Sachs

Ruth Jean Andersen has been teaching at Anthony (Kansas) Elementary School for more than thirty years. She is pictured with a current student and with her first 1st grade student, who now is the banker in Anthony.

3. ***Educational policy in support of each child's learning must reinvigorate democracy and authority at the child's immediate community level.*** In practice, this means:

- Schools that actively develop and exhibit respect for students and teachers as resources for the community, as well as community members as [illegible]cational resources for the school. These schools encos[illegible]autually beneficial exchanges between the school ...*nd* community. They also find ways to make the school, the home and the community powerful, positive venues for student learning. Such schools blur school/community boundaries, and assist students at all levels to make meaningful contributions to the well-being of their own localities.

- Schools that empower teachers, parents and community members to participate actively and meaningfully in the school's governance and policymaking. Such schools insist on the involvement of staff, family and community members in the school improvement process.

- Schools that breathe life into the ideas not only of "student as worker" but also of "student as citizen." Such schools demonstrate their commitment to democratic societies through the creation of forums in which students are able to acquire and apply the knowledge, skills and experience they need to act as effective citizens. Students are helped to understand that democracy is not a spectator sport and that each new generation must embrace the responsibility of active citizenship.

"

Such schools blur school/community boundaries and assist students at all levels to make meaningful contributions to the well-being of their own localities.

"

A CHALLENGE TO DEVELOP GENUINELY RURAL SCHOOLS

There is nothing especially "rural" about the educational principles and school characteristics championed by the Rural Challenge. However, the characteristics of most rural schools — such as their smallness, community linkages, and relative lack of bureaucracy — make them some of the nation's best laboratories for truly manifesting the Challenge's vision of good teaching and learning.

Moreover, the diversity of rural America dictates that the Challenge's key educational principles and school characteristics will be pursued and implemented in remarkably different ways across the nation's rural schools. The "patchwork quilt" quality of rural communities and rural schools is a positive reality on which to build, rather than a problem to be overcome. In fact, the Rural Challenge strongly rejects standardization — that is, the belief there is only one right way by which these standards can be achieved. By "genuinely rural," we mean schools that demonstrate the following three qualities:

> "... *Rural schools may be the nation's best laboratories for truly manifesting the Challenge's vision of good teaching and learning.*"

Salisbury (Vermont) Elementary School students, teachers, parents and community members join together in celebrating the children's academic achievements.

Frank Cezus / Impact Visuals

1. **Dedication to making the most of their rural nature.**

developing a unique "pedagogy of place"

Such schools regard their rural character as an opportunity, rather than as a burden or a mere fact of life. They are involved in developing a unique "*pedagogy of place*" that actively acknowledges and includes the local culture, language, history, economy, natural resources and citizenry. Such schools simultaneously celebrate and critique their ruralness, and function as the living hearts of their communities.

2. **Ability to successfully fulfill their dual mission.**

Unlike metropolitan schools (which often assume their students need to learn how to succeed only in metropolitan environments), rural schools must acknowledge a more complex obligation. On the one hand, they must not be so locally-oriented that they leave students ill-equipped (academically, psychologically or socially) to succeed in metropolitan places and in the larger global economy. On the other hand, they must not be so focused on life elsewhere that they leave students feeling bad about who they are and where they come from — or leave them incapable of seeing and seizing the local opportunities to remain and succeed in their home community. In other words, such rural schools accept the responsibility to be bi-cultural institutions that prepare their students equally well to successfully pursue the option to stay, the option to leave and the option to return.

accepting the responsibility to be bi-cultural institutions

3. **Capacity to creatively overcome, or effectively compensate for, their rural-related disadvantages.**

There are a variety of handicaps under which many rural schools traditionally have labored — e.g., "too few" students, teachers and specialized resources; geographic isolation; poverty; underfunded school systems; and the imposition of inappropriate education models and insensitive policies by external agencies. Schools that will attract special attention from the Challenge are those with the creativity and the drive to have found — or now are ready to commit themselves to finding — successful ways of dealing with such rural problems. Although the Challenge has no interest in such "reforms" as forced/coerced school and school district consolidation, there is considerable interest in the creative and appropriate use of distance learning technologies and techniques, the development of "clusters" of schools that share resources, school-incubated enterprises and other promising innovations.

creatively overcoming inherent disadvantages

Robin Sachs

Ivan Neal teaches fourth grade at Frankford (Delaware) Elementary School.

> "... *the Challenge has no interest in such "reforms" as forced/coerced school and school district consolidation....*"

A CHALLENGE TO "BUSINESS AS USUAL"

The Rural Challenge places the overwhelming majority of its resources "where the action is" — that is, in those communities, classrooms, schools, districts and networks where there are good opportunities to powerfully upgrade the quality of student learning and directly improve the daily reality of public schooling in rural America.

The remaining resources are devoted to changing harmful or obstructive policies toward, and perceptions of, rural schools; connecting pioneering public schools/districts/networks with others intending to move in similar directions; creating a broad public and professional movement for rural school improvement; and, documenting and assessing the merits of the work undertaken.

> "*the top priority is to actively seek out those schools, communities and organizations already acting in harmony with the Rural Challenge's vision and those ready to make a serious commitment to do so.*"

How the Rural Challenge operates — five distinctive features:

- ***Search Process***. Instead of allowing the Rural Challenge to become just another competition among grant writers, the top priority is to actively seek out those schools, communities and organizations already acting in harmony with the Rural Challenge's vision and those ready to make a serious commitment to do so. Wonderful work was underway in rural America before the Rural Challenge came into existence. Identifying the people and places doing this work and encouraging them to become partners in the Annenberg Rural Challenge lies at the heart of the s ategy.

- ***Regional Teams***. To conduct this on-going search, the Rural Challenge relies primarily on independent "talent scouts" and regional teams (made up of private sector funders, rural school/community representatives, and rural-oriented support organizations). These teams also serve as the coordinators and advocates for all other Challenge activities in their region.

- ***Collaboration***. The Rural Challenge seeks to reduce the isolation existing among the people and organizations that share a common vision of genuinely good, genuinely rural schools. Becoming a partner carries with it the opportunity and the obligation to work closely with other communities, schools, networks and organizations. In fact, all individual schools supported by Annenberg funds become part of a Challenge-related cluster or network of institutions. The idea is to create a *critical mass* of reformers and allies who — by acting *together* — can transform rural education.

- ***Inclusiveness*** This term has three meanings within the Rural Challenge. First, the movement for rural school improvement includes not only like-minded educators, but also students, parents, community organizations, rural groups, elected officials, other leaders, and "ordinary" rural citizens. Second, the Rural Challenge includes communities, schools and organizations at an early stage of implementing this vision of rural education, as well as those farther along this path. Third, the Rural Challenge actively seeks out and includes those rural populations (i.e., African-Americans, Native Americans, Hispanics, and other bilingual/bi-cultural groups) and those types of schools (i.e., very small and/or remote ones) that, historically, have been overlooked and discriminated against even *within* the world of rural education.

- ***National Agenda*** From creating a national communications system to establishing a unified approach to documentation and evaluation, the Rural Challenge sponsors a limited, but vital, set of national level initiatives. Beyond directly serving the regional teams and the state and local partners, the Rural Challenge's national office also acts as a national advocate for rural school improvement and develops partnerships with other national agencies and organizations.

George Guthridge has coached several teams of Eskimo students at Aniguiim High School in Elim, Alaska, to national championships in academic competitions.

A CHALLENGE TO USE RESOURCES WISELY

The money entrusted to the Rural Challenge is not allocated "evenly" across the country on the basis of a set formula, nor on the basis of general need. *The Annenberg funds follow where the best Challenge-related work is being done and where the deepest commitments to the Rural Challenge are being made and kept.*

All Annenberg funds are allocated by the Rural Challenge's National Board of Directors. Proposals for local, state and regional activities must be invited, and recommended, by the Challenge's regional teams before they will be approved by the National Board. Similarly, proposals for national level work must be invited, and recommended, by the national staff (in close consultation with the regional teams) before the National Board approves them.

No Challenge money may be spent on construction or renovation, on ordinary operating expenses, or to cover budget shortfalls. Similarly, no funds are allocated to activities that do not directly advance the goals of the Rural Challenge — not even to "good" projects/programs, if they are isolated efforts with little hope of leading to good *schools*.

The Rural Challenge's national office and regional teams are responsible for the "matching fund" process. They certify which private and public grants across the nation qualify as matching funds. More important, they encourage private and public funders to commit new resources to the Rural Challenge. Funders may make grants directly to the Rural Challenge — or they may fund a particular grantee and then request that these funds "count" as part of the Rural Challenge. In other words, the Rural Challenge itself identifies, leverages and raises the money needed to trigger the release of all Annenberg funds.

"*The Annenberg funds follow where the best Challenge-related work is being done and where the deepest commitments to the Rural Challenge are being made and kept.*"

Billy E. Barnes

Entrepreneurship students and teachers doing the classroom work of planning their own business.

By creating a [illegible]al pool of resources and by maintaining control over the allocation of all Annenberg funds, the National Board ensures that worthy rural schools, and exciting Challenge-related activities — even when lacking any other external support — still can receive funds from the Rural Challenge.

At the same time, the Rural Challenge is serious about creating *partnerships*, not providing charity. **All** recipients of Annenberg funds must bring something substantial to this partnership and must commit resources of their own (beyond those provided by any external grants). This may mean reallocating existing funds in ways that further the Challenge's goals. It also could entail in-kind contributions or such "sweat equity" as community, professional or student volunteer time spent on Challenge-related work.

A CHALLENGE TO CREATE PARTNERSHIPS

The resources made available through the Annenberg Challenge are to be used in ways that will result in real and significant improvements in America's public schools. Most of that work can be done only by the students, educators, families and communities who affect, and are affected by, these schools on a daily basis. That is why the Rural Challenge's resources are devoted primarily to work at the local level. The additional state, regional and national activities it supports must powerfully address the problems and opportunities these rural public schools face every day.

The Annenberg Rural Challenge is an open invitation to rural America to play a leadership role in the movement to rethink and rebuild America's public schools. If the goals and the vision described here are ones you share, then you would be warmly welcomed as a partner in this initiative.

There are four kinds of partnerships the Annenberg Rural Challenge seeks — beyond the essential private and public funding partners. They are distinguished by the extent to which the Challenge's vision for rural education in the 21st century is reflected in their present work. The hope is that partners will progress as far as possible through the following four steps.

Ambassador Annenberg has challenged all who care about the lives of our children, and the future of our nation, to both "do the right thing" and "do the thing right" in our public schools. The Annenberg Rural Challenge has been created to spark a movement in favor of genuinely good, genuinely rural schools — schools that inspire their students, strengthen their communities and play a leadership role in dramatically improving the quality of American public education. We hope it is a challenge you will take to heart and embrace as your own.

1 • ***Exploring Partners***. This includes people, schools and organizations excited by the Rural Challenge's vision and goals — and interested in considering these reforms — but not yet active in this arena. Rural Challenge resources at this level are primarily directed to providing information and encouraging the learning process, rather than to making direct grants.

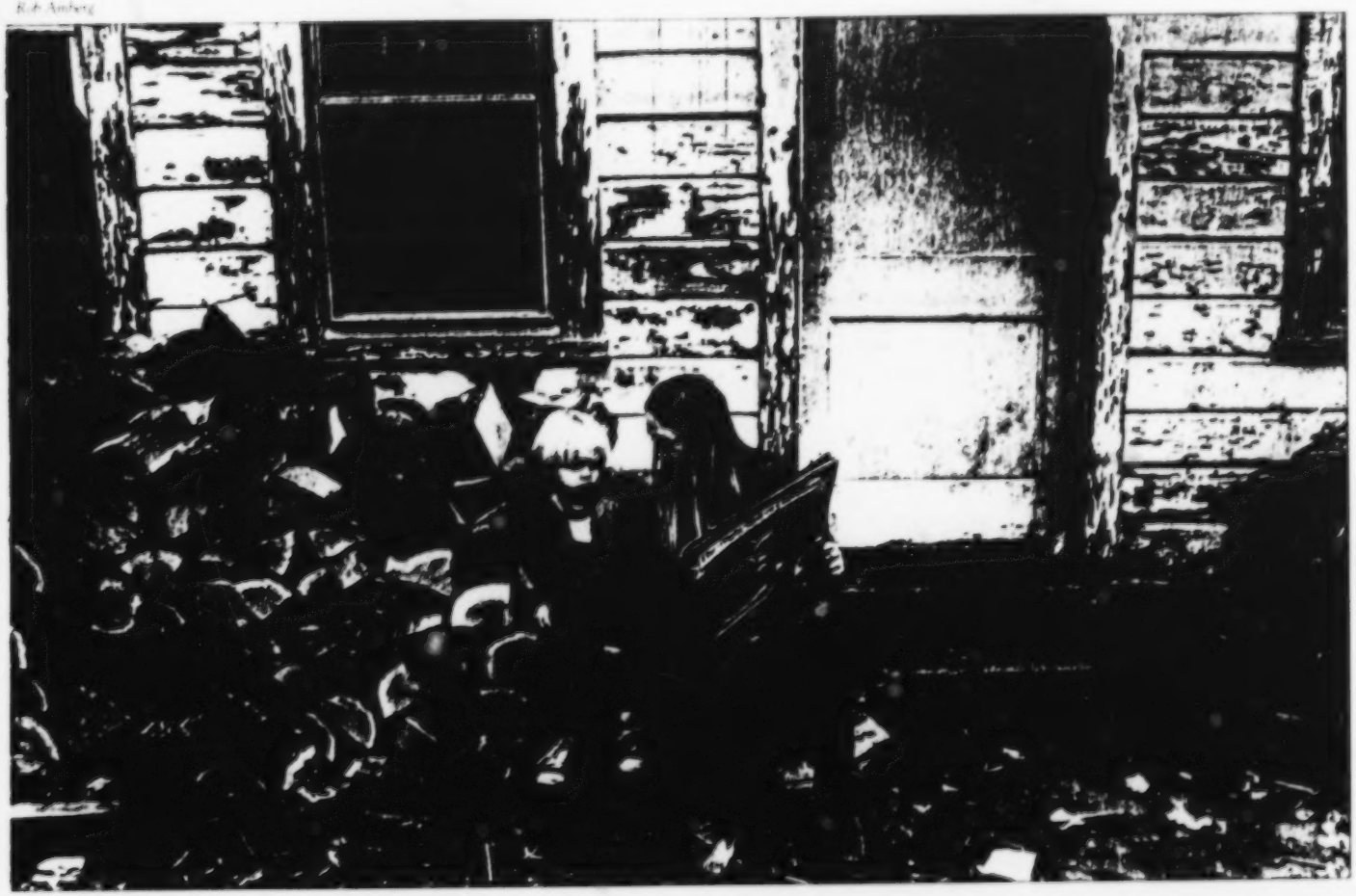
2 • ***Experimenting Partners***. This category encompasses those who already have weighed the merits of moving in this direction, decided in favor of doing so, and now are at the planning and developmental stage. At this level, most Rural Challenge resources will be offered in the form of networking opportunities, technical assistance and advice, rather than in financial support.

3 • ***Expanding Partners***. The common factor linking partners here is that they already manifest and promote some of the educational principles, school characteristics or rural qualities endorsed by the Rural Challenge. However, there are two distinct sub-groups here: individual educators and local projects that currently are fairly isolated, but have strong potential to be the catalyst for *school-wide* reform; and, multi-site programs and organizations that are succeeding in implementing one or more aspects of the Rural Challenge's vision (but not other, equally important, aspects). The Rural Challenge will make many of its grants at this level, in order to help these partners both deepen the work they already do well and expand their endeavors to encompass the whole vision.

4 • ***Extending Partners***. This small, but extraordinarily valuable, group is comprised of those schools, networks and organizations that are well down the road in terms of implementing the Rural Challenge's goals. While not flawless, these are the current exemplars of how to put the Challenge's guiding principles into daily practice. Grants at this level will be made not only to help these partners further refine their own work, but also to underwrite their active collaboration with Rural Challenge partners in the other three categories.

"The Annenberg Rural Challenge is an open invitation to rural America to play a leadership role in the movement to rethink and rebuild America's public schools."

Rob Amberg



Reading at home in the Hopewell community of Madison County, North Carolina.

"Ambassador Annenberg has challenged all who care about the lives of our children, and the future of our nation, to both "do the right thing" and "do the thing right" in our public schools. The Annenberg Rural Challenge has been created to spark a movement in favor of genuinely good, genuinely rural schools — schools that inspire their students, strengthen their communities and play a leadership role in dramatically improving the quality of American public education. We hope it is a challenge you will take to heart and embrace as your own."